a mask frame; and

a pair of female connector portions formed in one piece with the mask frame and being configured to receive the male connector portions therein.

34. (Previously Presented) The respiratory mask assembly of claim 33, wherein the mask frame includes a front wall portion defining a forward end of the mask frame, the front wall portion having a circular gas inlet aperture configured to connect to a gas delivery conduit, the mask frame including a pair of inclined side wall portions and a base portion, each side wall portion and the base portion having a portion thereof connected to the front wall portion.

35. (Previously Presented) The respiratory mask assembly of claim 34, wherein the mask frame includes a rim at rear edges of the inclined side wall portions and the base portion, the rim defining a rearward end of the mask frame and being configured to allow a cushion to be attached thereto.

36. (Previously Presented) The respiratory mask assembly of claim 33, wherein each of the female connector portions includes a generally oblong slot, the generally oblong slot being formed by a first wall structure that is disposed between respective side wall portions and the base portion, a pair of parallel spaced opposing wall structures extending generally perpendicularly from the first wall structure and a second wall structure extending between and connected to the pair of spaced opposing wall structures, the second wall structure being spaced from and generally parallel to the first wall structure, each of the first and second wall structures and the pair of spaced opposing wall structures having an inward end portion and an outward end

portion defining a direction that extends generally radially outwardly relative to the circular gas inlet aperture, the outward end portions defining the generally oblong slot therebetween.

37. (Previously Presented) The respiratory mask assembly of claim 36, wherein the second wall structure includes at least one recess extending therethrough configured to cooperate and receive the at least one resiliently biased locking element of the respective male connector portion, the at least one recess being formed adjacent the oblong slot.

38. (Currently Amended) The respiratory mask assembly of claim ~~27~~ 33 wherein the leading portion of each male connector portion is capable of being passed through the oblong slot of the respective female connector portion, such that the leading portion is disposed substantially between the first and second wall structures and substantially between the pair of spaced opposing wall structures, including the pair of longitudinally extending side beams being disposed between and generally parallel to the respective pair of spaced opposing wall structures, the cross piece being disposed proximate and generally parallel to the inward end portion of the first wall structure, the cantilevered member extending substantially between the first and second wall structures, the locking element being positioned within the recess, and the trailing portion being disposed adjacent to the outward end portions of the first and second wall structures and the spaced opposing wall structures.

39. (Previously Presented) A respiratory mask and headgear combination comprising a respiratory mask having a rigid mask frame, headgear for securing said mask on a patient, said headgear including at least one attachment strap, said mask frame having rigidly secured thereto

a rigid first connector portion and a second connector portion adapted for releasable mating with said first connector portion, wherein

said first and second connector portions form a press-release connection between said mask frame and said strap;

said first connector portion is a female connector formed in a piece with said mask frame; and

said second connector is a corresponding male connector.

40. (Previously Presented) The respiratory mask and headgear combination of claim 39, wherein said male connector includes a resiliently biased cantilever member depending from a leading end portion of said male connector.

41. (Previously Presented) A respiratory mask and headgear combination comprising:

a respiratory mask having a rigid mask frame, adjustable headgear for securing said mask on a patient, said headgear including at least one attachment strap, said mask frame having rigidly secured thereto a first connector portion, and a second connector portion adapted for releasable mating with said first connector portion, wherein

said first and second connector portions form a press-release connection between said mask frame and said strap;

one of said first connector portion and said connector portion is a female connector;

the other of said first connector portion and said second connector portion is a corresponding male connector; and

one of said first and second connector portions is integrally formed in one piece with the mask frame.

42. (Previously Presented) A respiratory mask and headgear combination according to claim 41, wherein the male connector portion includes a resiliently biased cantilever member.

43. (Currently Amended) A respiratory mask and headgear combination according to claim 42, wherein said cantilever member has a leading end, a trailing end, a locking portion, located intermediate said leading end and trailing end, structured to engage with said first connector portion, and a release portion located adjacent said trailing end.

44. (Previously Presented) A respiratory mask and headgear combination according to claim 43, wherein said release portion comprises a raised portion adjacent a trailing end of said cantilever member.

45. (Previously Presented) A respiratory mask and headgear combination according to claim 44, wherein a space is provided immediately behind said trailing end of the cantilever member.

46. (Previously Presented) A respiratory mask and headgear combination according to claim 43, wherein said locking portion comprises at least one lug on a forward surface of said cantilever member, said lug engaging a corresponding socket of said first connector portion.

47. (Previously Presented) A respiratory mask and headgear combination according to claim 41, wherein said first and second connector portions are structured to be spaced forwardly of the patient's face by said rigid mask frame.

48. (Previously Presented) A respiratory mask for use with a headgear having a pair of first connector portions thereon, the respiratory mask comprising:

a mask frame;

a pair of second connector portions formed in one piece with the mask frame and being configured to mate with the pair of first connector portions;

wherein one of the first and second connector portions includes a resiliently biased locking element so as to form a press-release connection between the headgear and the mask.

49. (Previously Presented) A respiratory mask according to claim 48, wherein the mask frame includes a front wall portion defining a forward end of the mask frame, the front wall portion having a circular gas inlet aperture configured to connect to a gas delivery conduit.

50. (Previously Presented) A respiratory mask according to claim 49, wherein the mask frame includes a rim defining a rearward end of the mask frame and configured to allow a cushion to be attached thereto.

51. (Previously Presented) A respiratory mask according to claim 48, wherein one of the pair of first and second connector portions comprises a pair of female connector portions.

52. (Previously Presented) A respiratory mask according to claim 51, wherein each of the female connector portions includes a wall structure that is disposed between respective side wall portions, each of said first wall structures and the side wall portions having an inward end portion and an outward end portion defining a direction that extends generally radially outwardly relative to the circular gas inlet aperture.

53. (Previously Presented) A respiratory mask according to claim 52, wherein the first wall structure includes at least one recess extending therethrough configured to cooperate and receive the at least one resiliently biased locking element of the respective male connector portions.

54. (Previously Presented) A respiratory mask assembly comprising:

a headgear structure including at least one elongate strap, each end of the elongate strap being doubled over to form a loop;

a pair of male connector portions, each of the male connector portions including a leading portion and a cantilevered member extending from the leading portion toward a trailing portion of the male connector portion, the cantilevered member being movable between deflected and undeflected positions and being resiliently biased toward the undeflected position, the cantilevered member including a locking element extending outwardly therefrom;

a mask frame; and

a pair of female connector portions configured to receive the male connector portions therein.